

# Brussels Sprout

## History

Brussels sprouts are believed to originate from the city which they get their name from- Brussels, Belgium. Records trace them back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the Brussels area. The French coined the name in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They are not native to the United States, and they are not known to grow in the wild. In 1800, the French introduced Louisiana to Brussels sprouts. New York and California are the leading growers in the US, with the Netherlands and European countries also growing sprouts.

Brussels sprouts are believed to be descendants of wild Mediterranean kale. They have naturally developed a tolerance to salt and limestone. The sprouts require a long and cool growing season- they grow best in slightly frosty weather. Brussels sprouts and other leafy greens, like cabbage, are part of the Brassica family.

Sprouts grow on a stalk and each stalk may produce 15-20 sprouts. The plant may grow to be up to 2-3 feet tall. They get their sweet flavor if kept cool in the summer and exposed to frost. Sprouts should be harvested when they are bright green and before they turn yellow.

The leafy greens are loaded with vitamin A, C, potassium, calcium, and fiber. Unlike many vegetables, Brussels sprouts contain protein.

Over-cooking the sprouts results in a strong and often unpleasant sulfur flavor. Fresh sprouts can be kept in the refrigerator for up to a week.

## Varieties

**Long Island Improved** is the most common version in home gardens.

**Prince Marvel** matures faster than other varieties.

**Jade Cross** is available for harvest earlier than other varieties and is the most ideal for freezer storage.



## Fun Facts

- Great Britain considers the Brussels sprout their national vegetable
- Brussels sprouts are a cruciferous vegetable. It is called this because the flowers have four petals and resemble a Greek cross



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